Construction of Dawki Bridge connecting Meghalaya and Bangladesh

2679. SHRI ONWARD L. NONGTDU: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are implementing the new initiatives for North-Eastern region as committed by the Prime Minister on the 27th October, 1996; and

(b) if so, by when the construction work of Dawki bridge connecting Meghalaya and Bangladesh is likely to start?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T. G. VENKATRAMAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. In so far as construction of Dawki bridge is concerned, it may be stated that since the agency for consultancy services, for preparation of detailed project, has been fixed only recently, it is too early to indicate the date of actual start of this work.

Pension to Port Employees

2680. SHRIMATI ANANDIBEN JETHABHAI PATEL: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) the names of Port Trusts which had asked fresh option from their employees of class III and IV who retired during 1983 under contributory provident fund scheme to switchover pension scheme after their retirement;

(b) the details of the policy of Government under which the Port Trusts authorities asked above said option;

(c) whether High Court of Bombay delivered any judgement by which employees of Bombay Port Trust who retired during 1983 under C.P.F. scheme got above said option;

(d) if so, the details of case and writ petition number;

(e) whether the judgement has been followed by other Major Port Trusts; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T. G. VENKATRAMAN): (a) No port other than Mumbai Port Trust had asked for a fresh option from class III and class IV employees who retired during 1983 and who were under contributory provident fund scheme to come over to pension scheme.

(b) The Central Government introduced in April 1980, a liberalised pension scheme in respect of port employees who were in service as on 31.03.1979. However, the employees of Mumbai Port Trust could not avail of this benefit because Mumbai Port Trust could implement this scheme only in February 1983. On examination of a proposal from Mumbai Port Trust *inter-alia* to allow option to such of the class III and class IV employees who were on Contributory Provident Fund on 31.03.1979 and retired/died on or before 31.12.83 to come over to pension scheme, the Central Government had agreed to the proposal.

(c) and (d) Three writ-petitions bearing Nos. 594 of 1986, 595 of 1986 and 596 of 1986 were filed in the High Court of Bombay. However, no judgement was delivered.

(e) and (f) Do not arise.